

## Interview H0205 : with Sambo, Tenzin Thondrub [tib. bsam pho, bstan 'dzin don grub, (India, 1981) : Part No. 13 of 25

*Sambo talks about how his family raised the additional income to pay Lungshar's new Babshi tax.*

Q

Concerning the Babshi Tax assessed on your family, how did you actually pay this?

A

We were imposed a tax of 2,500 khe of grain for the Babshi which we didn't have to pay in the past. This tax was imposed all over the places, not only on us. At that time, they didn't make any change in the [land] basis for paying the taxes but they just imposed 2,500 khe as an extra tax. Therefore we said that we didn't have the means to pay that and if we have to pay that amount, we, as an old family of the Dalai Lama, would be unable to manage ourselves. So we submitted a petition and requested that the government give us a source of livelihood [tib. 'thso rten] or please take back our estates and lands. The investigator was Lungshar.

[repeats earlier tape story of losing the 9 estates]

At that time, my father was quite young and he discussed with the chandzö about the matter and found that the many of our estates were leased out. However, the leasees had documents specifying the amount of the leases that was fixed in early times. So we couldn't make any changes. Therefore, we submitted another petition saying that we had a tax of 5,000 khe imposed, but we didn't have the any chance to obtain the taxes on the lands that we had leased to other people because they had land tenure documents issued by our previous generations and as well as the government. This petition was approved and said, "You don't need to adhere to the seals issued by the government and your family in the past. Instead you have to assess a lease fee that will be agreeable by both sides [tib. gnyis lo'i 'bab bzo]." So they went to the site of the leased land and together with the

## Library of Congress

### Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

person who was in occupation of the land, they tried to fix a sum that was acceptable to both, the assessor and the person in occupation of the land and his family. After doing this, we were able to offer 5,000 khe to the government.

Q

I do not understand did they go to the land and say to the people that they were paying only a small amount or something like that?

A

Yes. They would go to the land. Supposing it was a small farm and the tenant had been paying something like ten cents. Then they would revalue it and ask for say thirty cents. If the tenant could not pay then they would take away the land and give it to somebody else who is willing to pay the new rate.

Q

Okay, these lands were leased, right?

A

Yes, they would measure the land and say that this land can yield so much grain so the revenue due would be accordingly fixed for payment by the landlord and his family, otherwise if the tenant could not pay; they would look for a new tenant.

Q

What about the land of the treba? And the land that people were leasing? People who were paying money every year usually as work or by some small amount of grain? But what of people who did the corvee taxes, were their taxes raised also?

A

When we reassessed the land, it was done in a lenient manner [tib. dp̣ya yang po]. For the lease they would do the seven times the seed. That is, for every khe of land they would assess the yield as seven times the seed sown. This would be divided into two halves--half for the owner of the land and the other half for the tenant [tib. bdun skor phyed shas].

Q

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

When you did the seven times the seed, who provided the seed?

A

The person who was working on the land had to arrange for the seed.

Q

What about the treba?

A

When they did the seven times, each gang was given to six people who were paying the mibo and who didn't have the work or they didn't have a place to work. Since I didn't work on that, I am not sure how they worked for the horse corvée and the pack animals. Supposing when they have to collect 5 dotse as a tax, each gang had to pay about 15-16 sang.

Q

Was this when they raised this lease fee?

A

Yes this was when they raised this.

Q

And what was the reason for giving 6 people to each gang?

A

The people said that as the raise, with the proposed implementation of the seven times return of the seed, had almost amounted to 50%, they would not find any people to work as laborers for every gang and requested for working people. So we gave each gang 6 people from among the mibo payers.

Q

I see, were those people given to them during their life time?

A

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

It was supposed to be for life, but if they did not get along well they could run away.

Q

When the mibo people go there, how did they get their food now?

A

They had to give food and clothing and make them to work.

Q

So they became like servants basically?

A

They had to feed, clothe, and provide for their livelihood.

Q

Didn't they get paid?

A

Anyway, they had to provide their living everything like food and clothe.

Q

How many extra people were involved?

A

Four or five thousand definitely. There were a lot of them left because every year there were newborns. There might be some parents who had 15-20 children.

Q

If I understand this right, if one person had a kid, was the kid also supposed to work?

A

When the child became thirteen years old, automatically, the parents would think that people may say something and they would request to pay the mibo.

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

What if they didn't request to pay the mibo?

A

Otherwise some other people would try to use them and send them hither and thither.

Q

So, if they request to pay the mibo, they could get through it, right

A

Yes.

Q

What happened in the case of these people if his wife was from some other lord [tib. dpon khungs]? Does she have to work?

A

The wife had to work where she belonged and the husband where he belonged, but their families were there, and wherever they were called to work they had to go there, but otherwise they worked in their respective plots. However, but if there was some problem they would do people exchange--the husband would go to the wife's lord or the wife would go to the husband's lord, and then they exchange a person [to even it out]

Q

So that was then [unclear], still was anything done with the lease? According to what you said, it seems everybody was paying the boma lease fee. Were there any separate treba other than those who were paying the boma fees?

A

The treba were also obliged to pay the boma lease fee in the same way.

Q

## Library of Congress

### Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Actually, under your household, is it correct that you had two different groups of people: the boma lease fee payers and the treba?

A

That was the system. However, the extra benefit for the treba was that they had a house for doing the taxes (called a trekhang [tib khral khang]).

Q

Did they pay the same half of the boma yield?

A

Yes.

Q

How did they work for the taxes?

A

They had to work for taxes according to the amount of the taxes they were obliged to work for baed on the land (the gang) and they also had to pay half the amount of the lease yield fee because they had the land.

Q

Who was managing your estates at that time?

A

For example, we had the Estate Manager, shidö [tib. gzhis sdod] called Tranang [tib. gra nang] Shidö.

Q

But, he himself couldn't go to all the estates, right?

A

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Yes, there were two shidö who were the main in charge and there were many estates under them. Probably, there were 15-20 estates and each estate had a shidö and he will manage the estate.

Q

At that time, you just leased those estates, right?

Q

Yes, otherwise, it was too many that we couldn't manage by ourselves.

Q

You said that each gang was given 6 people after you assessed the land. Who were working on the field before that?

A

I am not sure about this. then, Probably each estate had their own miser and probably, they also might have small householders working for the estate.

Q

There were these two kinds of people who had the basis for working as a tax, treten [tib. khral rten] and some who didn't have treten and they were paying the boma?

A

Yes, the people who had the treten were one separate group.

Q

What did they have to do?

A

In general, before that the treba just paid about 5-6 sho, but later they were also paying the half of the seven round yield. There was also a separate private land, on which everybody had to work for about five or six days in a year, the land was called changdeb [tib. phyag 'debs], everybody had to help them grow on that.

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

Would that include all the people who were paying boma or just the treba working on the changdeb?

A

I think that everybody living in that area had to come for about ten to fifteen days to work on the changdeb.

Q

Do the people who were paying boma have to be your miser or it was leased indiscriminately?

A

Mostly, it was within our miser, for if it was leased outside, there might be an objection saying that the income would go out and we have to do the work. So they would keep it inside our own miser. Most of them had been giving half of the seven times return, half of this seven times return goes to the owner and half to the worker. But in fallow areas where there were mountains and rocks, they should have been given outside.

Q

What about the other kinds of taxes people pay? They have to send soldiers sometimes with meat tax, or butter or other kinds of things? Did they eliminate all of them or did people have to pay them still?

A

Whatever taxes the gang was payable earlier, were maintained, this was the additional.

Q

Now, it is divided to all of them right?

A

Yes, divided.



Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

Sending soldiers was also done according to the gang, right?

A

Yes, whoever had land they looked after. Our family had done this, but the other gerpa and the monastic estates were not like this.

Q

I understand.

A

The Sambo family did this, but maybe some other families did not collect Revenue from the land, as the Sambo family, they just paid a little bit and left it, but many did not make any revenue. For example, the Thönpa's [tib. thon pa] chandzö was with me in the jail and when he spoke about this, he told me that they [government] did not collect anything much from Thönpa, for the Revenue raised by Lungshar, probably they were imposed to pay about 200-300 khe, but they paid a little amount and certain amounts were shown as dues, and nobody ever bothered to collect them, so it went on like this, it was just shown as dues from the Thönpa's family.

Q

I heard that the one of the first kudrak families to whom Lungshar levied a big Babshi was Lhalu, is that right?

A

I heard from Thönpa Chandzö that even Lhalu and Shatra [tib. bshad sgra] had paid half of the taxes, and left the rest of it as the due. And every year it was due, due and due but nobody really ever asked for it.

Q

Did all this happen at the same time when they levied the babshi to Tashilunpo?

A

## Library of Congress

### Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

It was done at once. Tashilunpo was then saying that it was five thousand five hundred although I had not talked to anybody in the Tashilunpo, that is what I had heard. They did not work detailed among the land and just kept on shouting, and the land was tremendously different, between the Tashilunpo and Sambo's and Sambo is much smaller.

Q

In addition to the 5,000, did he have to pay any money also or was it just the 5,000 khe of grain?

A

For instance, I asked my late brother Tsögo if he had any babshi to pay, and Tsögo said that he did not have to any babshi because, he had a beautiful woman who was the shidö. So she slept with Lungshar for 2-3 nights. [laughter] Therefore, he did not have to pay anything.

Q

Did he come personally?

A

Most probably he went to all the places.

Q

Did he go all over Tibet or something?

A

Most probably, he traveled all over the country. That is a big job, except the Kham area.

Q

How many years did it take him?

A

It should have taken him two to three years or there about.

Q

## Library of Congress

### Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

I heard, everyone says that the first few years of the Taktra period were very good years. What different things that was done by Taktra?

A

He didn't have any other special characters to show. But, as Reting was young and doing funny things, and Taktra was older and more stable and didn't do reckless things. That is why people felt that it was little better than Reting, otherwise there is nothing he had done extraordinarily.

Q

It seems to me that there were some good things that he did, one was; did Taktra make an announcement that he wouldn't sent any traders anywhere. In case there some traders using the name of the regent's labrang, they should be accused in the respective places, was that correct?

A

That is true, but it may have been about a year that he may have been able to administer, kind of fairly and dependable since he was an old man.

Q

In 1942, he recreated the, Foreign Office, Chigyel Lekhung [tib. phyi rgyal las khungs] and it seems that although he was an old man he was not against change.

A

There was a foreign office long before that. I have also seen some photos of my grandfather who was then the Foreign Minister, but it is true that in 1942, he may have appointed Surkhang Surpa and Lobsang Palden [tib. blo bzang dpal ldan] or Liushar. Later, Liushar was definitely the in charge. There was also Könjo Gyurme [tib. dkon mchog 'gyur med].

Q

Könjog Gyurme [tib. dkon mchog 'gyur med] was Yinggön Talama [tib. dbyings mgon ta bla ma] and probably, he was not there at that time. Wasn't he dead then?

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

A

[unclear]

Q

I had heard that in the autumn of 1943, 18 Tibetan military officers like gyagpön and rupön were sent to Gyantse for military training like firing cannon and so on.

A

I think this is true. Before that, we didn't have the Brenguns. I think that the leftovers of the Second World War second hand weapons like Bren Guns etc. were left in India, and some of the Political Officers in Sikkim asked [the Tibetans] if we needed any weapons, and we said that we did, that is what I think they did.

Q

Do you think that at this time, the Tibetan were more interested in making the army better? It seems that till 1944, the Government was doing good things like setting up schools?

A

Since the years like 1943, the glowing light of a good king has been lost [tib. 'od shi pa] and there was nothing.

Q

Well, what do you mean the glowing light was lost? What do you mean happened?

A

He was unable to be much fair and he depended entirely on what the chandzö told him to do and he was unable to think about a new idea or take some new methods. From 1943, he started losing everything and finally when he handed the political and spiritual power to the Dalai Lama, there was a song with the wording, "Yes, the King Taktra offered it, he offered a torn up politics." [tib. phul song la dang phul song/ rgyal po stag brag tshang gis/ chab srid rtsab ral phul song] By that time, Taktra became really baseless or without substance.

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

Are you also saying that there was a lot of bribery?

A

Then he became like a drawing or painting on the wall and he didn't have any thing.

Q

He did not do anything?

A

They did not do anything, they did not say in front of him, but behind his back everyone called him "Porto" [tib. spor to] (old man). Nobody called him Rinpoche. They just called him Taktra.

Q

Well, he didn't have any women or anything like that?

A

Since he was an old man he could not have any. [laughter]

Q

One of the big events during his early rule was that the Chinese wanted to build a road, and there was an American. Do you remember any of those things?

A

I have heard that they wanted to use it for military transportation through Tibet, but then they [Tibetan Government] refuse to permit a road for military purposed but were prepared to allow construction for non-military purposed. Two people were sent through Kham on horseback, and I heard this when I was in jail, that two people either American or English had come.

Q

Were you a government official then?

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

A

Yes.

Q

Do you remember clearly what they were discussing in the tsondu gyendzom or in the Government official circle?

A

At that time, we were not allowed to attend the more important meetings. Later on, in the prison we heard something about giving permits to the Americans or the British, to use the roads through Tibet. So it was confirmed later while in prison by fellow prisoners from the Kham area.

Q

After the Lhündup Dzong affair, there were a number of incidents demoting friends of Reting like Phünkhang Jedrung, Joktre, Phünkhang Sawang Chemo.

A

Later, Phünkhang Jedrung was like disappeared and he didn't have a place to stay. Before that, he lived like a queen of Reting. In the beginning, Phünkhang Jedrung was a student at Yigtsang and he didn't have any rank in the government. He was not a fully commissioned official. He became kind of queen when he was the student, so he was taken up by that and he neither stayed as a student nor became a tsidrung, but every one regarded him as a queen to the Regent, he however did not enjoy any rank or title. Just before Reting retired, he was appointed as shöndrön, and after Reting retired he became old and gradually faded from the limelight and nobody was attentive of him. After that, he was sent among the Khendrön Losum.

Q

After Reting went to the Reting, did Phünkhang Jedrung go with Reting or did he remain in Lhasa?

A

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

He remained in Lhasa. He was probably a little too old then.

Q

While in Lhasa was he working in the government then?

A

He was a government official of the shöndrön rank, under the Taktra. In 1942 or 1943, they appointed Jedrung La as one of the Khendrön Losum to be posted in China. He has at that time asked for leave to go to China, so he was dismissed from the services.

Q

Did he say he was unable to go or that he did not like to go?

A

He said that he did not want to go, unable to go.

Q

Did he give any reasons?

A

Some excuse of illness most likely. So he was dismissed from the service.

Q

Did they give any punishment or anything else?

A

No, he was not given any punishment.

Q

Why did they select Phünkang Jedrung as one of the Khendrön Losum? Did they do it purposely?

A

It may not have been purposely done, but since they had to choose one they chose him.

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

So that is one of the reasons why Reting held a grudge against Taktra. Then the second reason was something to do with Joktre?

A

There had been a law case, a big case between Künsangtse and Joktre, regarding some of the shidö, probably Künsangtse's was taking away a man belonged to Jogtre, I do not remember very clearly but they had a big aggressive case and the Tsikhang did the investigation. The chandzö of the Phala house appeared in the tsikhang on behalf of Künsangtse as Künsangtse's daughter was married in the Phala house, so the chandzö appeared and he requested, "May we not hand over the sheep for slaughtering to the butcher." [tib. shan pa'i lag par bshas lug sprod ma dgos pa cig]

Q

What does that mean?

A

This meant that the person should not be handed over to the Joktre's side; otherwise it would be like the sheep going to the butcher. To that Joktre replied, "You said that the abbot of Sera-Je is the butcher."

Q

What did Sera Jey do?

A

Probably, the man belonged to Künsangtse was taken away by Sera Je. It seems that it didn't make much difference whether who won or lost, they were just fighting only as a matter of pride and not tolerating to each other.

Q

If Sera Jey was taking away the man belonged to Künsangtse, then why would Joktre and Sera Jey get confronted?



Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

A

I do not know how they were involved. Anyway, Jogtre was involved in that.

Q

How did it end, what happened then?

A

It didn't make any difference for them who win and who lose. It was only fame and pride that pushed them on to fight.

Q

Was Joktre jailed or demoted or something?

A

When this was going on, as I was sitting in the Kashag, I heard that some body was sent to seal the Jogtre's [house]. I asked what happened, but on that day, we didn't know for sure. After few days later, when we were listening we heard that probably they were suspicious on Jogtre for writing something and Kabshöpa was supposed to have said something in the Kashag because he was close to Künsangtse. He said that it was very dangerous, and that they could not take the responsibility unless the house of the Joktre was sealed, and everyone in the Kashag agreed and then suddenly it was sealed and there was nothing really important. [laughter] Then they set up an Investigation Committee, and my father was one of the members.

Q

When they sealed Joktre's house, did they jail him in Sharchenjog or removed his hair knot or something like that?

A

He was jailed in Lhogyü [tib. lho rgyud], the prison located at the south side of the Jokhang.

Q

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Did they remove his hair knot?

A

Probably, they might have not removed his hair knots. They just sealed his house.

Q

He was under arrest?

A

Under arrest, yes Joktre was a good dharma friend of my father's, who was in the investigation committee and his wife saw my father and started to cry, and my father was assuring her not to worry and that nothing would happen. This I do remember. Joktre was a good poet and he used to send poems to people from the jail, and he even wrote one to my father. When he was released, I was sent to console him, and he gave me a poem, I do not remember the words but it meant that the day of his release there had been a snowfall and this indicates that his heart was pure white.

Q

Were you there the day he was released? Why should he be sad, he should have been happy?

A

Because they sealed his house or something that was the custom, happy and sad at the same time. At that time, he said he and my father were good friends and he felt very grateful and expressed his gratitude for his help. Also he said that it was Kabshöpa who did all this, this I remember. After that, he thought that it may not be good to stay there any longer, normally he was quite a good religious person, and soon after he resigned totally from the service and he left. He then remained in Gyantse for a while and he then went to India, settled down there and died in India.

Q

How did Phünkhang Sawang Chemo resign?

A

## Library of Congress

### Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Phünkhang had a son, popularly known as Geshe-la, and a daughter who was married to one of the Dathangs [tib. mda' thang ?] who was hence known as Dathang Lhajam. Geshe la's father was Phünkhang Sawang Chemo, but the mother was different. They did not get along well with their stepmother, as she did not treat them well. Geshe-la had joined the Drepung Monastery. Normally, they send some furniture to Geshe-la regularly. Shagche means the requirement in the house of a monk, like tables, alters, furniture, etc. The shagche they sent him was however not befitting the son of a Phünkhang and he requested some more, but Phünkhang Lhajam refused.

Moreover there were some people who were instigating these two to demand for more from the Phünkhang house. And they told them to make an appeal to the government. They also told them that there may be a possibility of their being arrested, for a few days, but they would later get their share of the property from the Phünkhang house. Under the present condition they would not get anything, since the government did not like them. Therefore they made an appeal to the government.

Q

Who instigated them?

A

One of the Phünkhang's servants instigated them; the servants did not like the lady, Phünkhang Lhajam because she was very short tempered and often scolded them. The servants did not like her and referred to her as the Hadü [tib. ha cang bdud mo] female evil spirit or an ogress,[acted in the Tibetan opera] among themselves. So the Geshe-la thought that the servant was probably right and he presented an appeal. The appeal was made by Geshela and the lady, Dathang Lhajam. In the appeal he also mentioned that the Phünkhang Lhajam probably was saying that the Regent, Taktra was having an affair with a woman known as Nying Asong [tib. snying a song]. I do not know whether the Phünkhang Lhajam had said this, for sure, but Gesbela had mentioned this in the petition. When the petition reached the Kashag, the cabinet, they told Phünkhang Lhajam was to be given a hundred lashes. The Lhajam offered to pay money instead of receiving lashes [tib. rgyug dod]. Geshe-la probably got lashed 50-60 times and was given a little house with two stories attached to the main Phünkhang house as his share of the property. As a punishment the government confiscated the Kharag Estate of the Phünkhang. Phünkhang Sawang Chemno was demoted in the sense that he was given the title of a Gung. This

## Library of Congress

### Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

rank is equivalent to a shape but a difference is that he cannot attend the Kashag office, as he is used to do when he was the shape and also he had no gagpa.

Q

Was this before the Sera trouble?

A

Yes, it was before that.

Q

Was it before you went to India with that group?

A

Yes.

Q

Was this before you went to India, in 1947?

A

Yes, it was probably in 1945-1946.

Q

At the time when Kabshöpa was appointed the Sawang Chemo, some people say that he offered 50,000 dotse as a bribe.

A

Such was the talk.

Q

Do you think that this money was given to the regent directly or was it given to the chandzö, did Taktia know about it or did he not? Or how was it?

A

## Library of Congress

### Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

At that time, probably, he didn't give so much money, but probably he promised to pay a big sum of money. The sum of 50,000 dotse was a very big sum, and beyond our imaginations, and I do not think that the whole amount was paid. No, I doubt if he paid the full amount.

Q

Do you think the Taktra himself knew about it or how was it?

A

How could he not know this? I think that he pretended not to know, but I feel that he really knew about it.

Q

In the Reting's time, Reting was interested in building up his Labrang and keeping fancy people around. What was Taktra doing with all this money? Was he building up his Labrang or was he constructing new Labrangs?

A

He built a new Labrang when Taktra became the regent he built a new labrang. They finished it in 1943 and he invited all the government officials and they preformed the opera for good luck. He also bought the old Shakabpa house in Lhasa. Then he became a big man.

Q

Were there any other supporters or close people of Reting who were hurt or demoted during this period?

A

Let's see, there is the Jigyab Khempo an important post, above that was the Khenpo Ngawang Tenzin of Shöl, the Jayangshar Khenpo [tib. 'jam dbyangs shar], now let's see the trunyichemno Ngagpa-la [tib. sngags pa lags] passed away, and then there was another one, but I do not remember him. Anyway then the tsipön and the shape gradually resigned or were made to resign, among the shape, Phünkhang who was one of the more prominent was made to resign and Lhalu became the shape.

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

Who were the ones to get out?

A

Kashöpa, Ngabö came in Kabshöpa's place and Lhalu became shape.

Q

Lhalu came in whose place?

A

Lhalu probably came in Driyü's [tib. 'bri yul] place. No, Shakabpa came in Driyü's place.

Q

That's why the song came out, "The female yak [Driyü] was slapped and the hat [Shakabpa] got a double hat." [tib. 'dri la 'gram lcag gzhus nas/ zhwa la zhwa mo nyis rtseg] Was Driyul one of Reting's men?

A

He was insignificant. He just kept on drinking chang the whole day.

Q

How did he get thrown out?

A

Driyü had made some mistakes in the accounts of the Investigation Office [tib. zhib khang], something like that, it was a very small matter.

Q

They threw him out of the service from the post of tsipön?

A

He was made to leave from tsipönship.

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

Q

What rank did they leave for him?

A

He was demoted to the fifth rank, letsenpa [tib. las tshan pa].

Q

Am I right in thinking that Shakabpa also did not like the Reting because he was too rude, then his uncle Trimön was forced to resign, so he would have some hostility towards Reting.

A

It is possible that he was anti Reting, but he was definitely close to Taktra. I had spoken to Shakabpa but he didn't talk bad things about Reting at all. It was not this Lhalu, this one was the bridegroom. Before that, there was the Lhalu Gung who had a fat wife and they had a son who was the same age as my late father and they had been to school together and learned the culture from the same place. They were friends. Sometimes, my father would stay for two or three nights at Lhalu's place and sometimes he would spend two or three nights at Sambo. So once the Gung got ill and he passed away. His wife was really sad and worried--which is natural. Then the son also died when he was 16 years old, so the Lhagam was left all alone. So they decided that it was better to ask for a bridegroom. There were two brothers, the former Rampa Thaichi and Kytö [tib. skyid stod] and they had one wife. So Rampa Thaichi was given to Lhalu, and there was a song "Lhalu is located near the mountains, so the lady went to the mountain, Rampa is located near the river, so they threw away [neglected] the Karma into the river," [tib. lha klu ri thag nye bas/ lha lcam ri la shor song/ ram pa qu thag nye bas/ las 'bras qu la bskur song] meaning that Rampa had a wife and kids, but still he was sent as a bridegroom and probably, he stayed there for about 4-5 months there. Then they said that they didn't get along well and he went back.

Q

What do you mean by Lhalu being near the mountains and she went to the mountain?

Library of Congress  
Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

A

It meant that she was quite wild.

Q

I do not understand the last two lines of the song.

A

They had not honored Karma by throwing away the Karma into the river.

Q

Meaning that it was not fair?

A

It wasn't fair at all, yes.

Q

Was it after this that Mrs. Lhalu started off for Lungshar?

A

After a few months, four or five, Rampa Thaichi said he didn't get along well with Lhalu and he returned to the Rampa house. Like this, both the father and the son died. I saw that Lhalu had very big man size statues like Padma Sambawa and I heard before that, they were Nyingma sect. But, at that time, the Lhajam urinated [probably at the front of the statues] and said, "You eat this. I had performed so many rituals when my late husband died, but it didn't help. I also performed so many rituals when my son died. But it was still useless. So from now on, I am not going to practice religion [Buddhism]." Like this, she didn't practice religion. At that time, she met Phabongkha [tib. pha bong kha] Lama. Then she told Phabongkha, "I am going to become Muslim." Phabongkha said, "Why are you going to become a Muslim?" Then she said, "When the gung and my son died I performed so many rituals, but it didn't help. So I am not going to practice religion [Buddhism] and I am going to become Muslim." Then Phabongkha told her, "It doesn't mean that if you practice religion, you won't die. Nobody could perform rituals to avoid death. You shouldn't become a Muslim. If you don't want to be Nyingma, you can become Gelugpa. If you



## Library of Congress

### Tibetan Oral History Archive Project (Asian Division)

become a Muslim, how are you going to go among the people?" After Phabongkha gave her the instructions, probably she liked it and she decided to become Gelugpa. Since then, they just had the statues there, but she didn't practice Nyingma. Later, she had a great faith towards Phabongka.